

REMARKS:

In accordance with the foregoing, claim 5 has been amended for clarification, claim 8 has been cancelled without prejudice, and new claims 9-12 have been added. Claim 4 stands cancelled. No new matter has been added. Thus, claims 1-3, 5-7 and 9-12 are pending and under consideration.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER:

In item 1, the Examiner allowed Claims 1-3, and claim 8 was objected to for being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Claim 8 has been cancelled without prejudice.

REJECTION UNDER §112¶2:

In item 2, the Examiner rejected claim 5 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 5 has been amended to clarify that the “.. one client in each of said plurality of groups sets the pieces of collection information in the communication block, sets a collection result in the communication block, and circulates the communication block to a next client in an order based on the addresses”, and “... merges the communication block... to form a merged communication block and relays the merged communication block to the server.”

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a):

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 5 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,864,674 ('674) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,233,601 ('601). Claim 6 was rejected as being unpatentable over '674 in view of '601 and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,212,166 ('166).

'674 is directed to a reconfigurable local area network (LAN) according to which clients in a client-server environment are connected to the LAN based on priority where the clients are inserted between higher priority (faster clients) and lower priority (slower clients) than them.

'601 discusses a mobile codebase object serving as a repository of code to facilitate the operation of the agent where the agent mobile agent object executes a sequence of instructions on a first computer and migrates to a second computer to re-execute, allowing the mobile agent object to be transparent to the migration.

'166 discusses a data distribution method for performing data distribution between a

transmitter and a receiver where transmission confirmation is executed to indicate whether data distribution has been correctly completed.

The present application discloses an information collection and distribution system according to which a server transmits a communication block to one client among a plurality of clients and the one client distributes the communication block to a next client, thereby reducing load on the network and the time required for collection and distribution of information.

The Examiner compares the reconfigurable LAN of '674 with the information collection and distribution system of the present invention. All the clients in the '674 system are connected based on a priority, such as speed, so that when a new client requests access to the local area network (LAN), the system determines where to place the new client to maintain the priority order (see, column 1, lines 55-63 of '674). Each client is connected to a hub that dynamically sets the order of the clients (see, column 2, line 64 through column 3, line 4 of '674), and each client consistently passes a token to the next client until the destination is reached (See, column 2, lines 29-31 of '674). This means that all the clients are connected to the central hub, and all data is sequentially circulated through the clients and passes through the hub.

In contrast, as recited in amended claim 5, a server transmits "a communication block including at least addresses of the plurality of clients to one client of the plurality of clients" and "said one client partitions all the other clients into a plurality of groups and relays the communication block to one client in each of the plurality of groups" (see also, FIG. 1 and corresponding text of the present application). Further, the one client "merges the communication block from said final client of each circulation destination to form a merged communication block and relays the merged communication block to the server (see, claim 5 of the present application). The '674 system continually passes the token to the next client, and does not teach or suggest an information collection and distribution system according to which "one client relays a communication block to one client in each of the plurality of groups", where "a final client of a last circulation destination which has received the communication block last in each of said plurality of groups transmits the communication block to said one client" (see, amended claim 5 of the present application). Accordingly, the present invention reduces network traffic load and a time required for distribution and collection of information because the information is not unnecessary passed among clients between origin and final destination of the data.

The Examiner acknowledges that the '674 system does not teach or suggest communication block and circulation of the communication block, but relies on the '601 system

as providing the same. In '601, a mobile agent object including data and executable code (see, column 3, lines 21-24 of '601) migrates from a first computer to a second computer using an itinerary composed of a list of destinations and the name of an operation to be executed at the destination (see, column 2, lines 41-46 of '601). Similarly to the token in the '674 system, the mobile agent object is sequentially transmitted to destinations specified in the itinerary data structure. Thus, the '601 system does not teach or suggest "...one client in each of said plurality of groups" circulating the communication block as recited in amended claim 5 of the present application.

For at least the above-discussed reasons, dependent claims 6 and 7 that depend from independent claim 5 are allowable. For example, as recited in claim 7, "each client other than said one client and said final client transmits the communication block to said one client as intermediate notification when a next client as the circulation destination is in a stop state", and "said one client relays the communication block transmitted from said client to said server". This means that the "one client" of the present invention relays the communication block from each other client with the exception of itself and the final client as the notification of status to the server, and is not suggested or taught by the '674 system, which maintains an active check of the status of each client (see, column 3, lines 5-33 of '674).

Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejections.

NEW CLAIMS:

New claims 9 and 10 are added to emphasize that "a communication block including at least addresses of the plurality of clients and pieces of collection information" is transmitted to "one client" of the plurality of clients where the one client "partitions all the other clients into a plurality of groups and relays the communication block to one client in each of the plurality of groups". Further, as recited in claim 10, "pieces of collection information and a collection result" is set in the communication block while the communication block is distributed. This allows the present invention to channel the distribution and collection of data through a client in each group and ultimately to the partitioning client to reduce network traffic.

New claims 11 and 12 are added to further highlight the present application including "circulating the communication block in which distribution results are set to a client next in the order on the basis of destination addresses" (claim 11) where "said one client of each of said plurality of groups obtains the distribution information from the communication block, sets a distribution result in the communication block" (claim 12). Further, said one client that has

partitioned the clients into groups "merges the communication block... to form a merged communication block" and "relays the merged communication block to the server" where a final client of each of said plurality of groups transmits the communication block to the one client (claim 11 and 12).

Thus, new claims 9-12 recite patentably distinct features that allow information to be passed and received via one client in each group which in turn transmits/receives the information via the one client that partitioned the clients into groups.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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